

pleased to see this spirit of compassion alive in my hometown of Toledo, Ohio.

This past Monday, a delegation of 45 Toledo volunteers, including our Mayor Carlton Finkbeiner, traveled to Honduras to help the victims of Hurricane Mitch. Volunteers versed in housing construction are working with care to build 600 homes in Marcovia. At the same time, volunteers with health care training are joining with the International Medical Corps and Catholic Relief Services to provide victims with basic health care in Catacamas, Choluteca, and Marcovia.

These goodwill ambassadors from Ohio's Ninth District deserve recognition in this well of the House today. I commend them for their wonderful efforts to bring aid to a devastated region and assistance to our fellow citizens in this hemisphere. I echo their call for action by this Congress on the Emergency Supplemental Bill to help the devastated people of Honduras and Central America but also our farmers here at home.

Let this Congress be as humanitarian as the people of Toledo, Ohio.

#### AMERICA'S FUTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. Speaker, in the next 5 minutes, I want to ask my House colleagues and the people watching at home to help me write a new chapter in the American story. Over the next years, we will be the authors of this new chapter. Tomorrow our children will live this story.

As a father of four, nothing could make me feel more secure than knowing that this story includes my children pursuing their dreams and living a life free from dependency on government. Surely, all of us want our children and grandchildren to live in a place where freedom's lamp shines brightly for all people.

This is how the American story has read for nearly three centuries. This story began with a band of freedom-loving people who escaped oppression to form a new land of liberty. It is a story of exploration and new beginnings, a story of faith, enterprise, tragedy, and success. Its pages are filled with the names of heroic men and women like Patrick Henry, Frederick Douglass, Susan B. Anthony, and others. It is also filled with lesser known names but no less special: The mothers, fathers, grandparents, teachers, coaches, doctors.

We, in every line, in every chapter, the American story is filled with a Nation defined by its people, governed by its citizens, and preserved by those who love freedom. But too many are still uneasy about our future.

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We lie awake at night worrying about tomorrow. Will our paychecks be enough to cover the bills? Will Social Security be around when we retire? Will we be able to provide the health care our elderly parents need and deserve? Will our children get the education they need to succeed in the next century?

We have the ability to give every American more security. But we will have no security, no hope, no opportunity if we trade away our liberty to achieve that security. I believe the gravest threat to our country is from those who promise security in return for our freedom. They promise security in exchange for more of our money and more control of our lives. Some of those in government even act as if they were elected to manage our lives. I believe we were elected to provide a framework of freedom so Americans can manage their own lives. We were also elected to provide a safety net for those in need when families, communities and States are unable to help. But the need for this safety net does not require the confiscation of our freedoms. We must remember that in America, we are most secure when we are most free, when we are in control of our lives.

Many believe that the debates in Congress are about which party is for Social Security, Medicare, education and the environment. The fact is we are all for these things. Every Member of the House wants to provide a strong and bright future for our country. The real debate in this Congress day in and day out is about who is going to control your life, you or the government.

Many of us here who call ourselves the GOP believe in a government of the people. This means, as it has for three centuries, that the government is controlled by you and your family, not the other way around. We believe in the GOP that we can secure the future for every child when we have an education system that is controlled by parents, teachers and local communities. And we will secure the future for every senior when we guarantee their Social Security benefits today and move towards giving their grandkids a choice to own and control their own Social Security accounts. We believe that we will secure the future for every older American when they have even greater access to quality health care and can choose their own doctors and make their own health care decisions. We will secure the future for our Nation when we rebuild our national defense and can control our borders and live free of the fear of missile attacks. And we will secure the future for every working American when we let them keep more of what they earn, a lot more.

Now is the time for us to write our chapter about America, an America

that is free and secure and controlled by its people. Let no one edit the American story in a way that makes us dependent on the government or politicians. Let us write about a people that can overcome every challenge, education, jobs, health care, retirement, whatever we face. May our families live freer today than they did yesterday, and may we sustain a Nation that is dependent only upon God and the blessings of freedom.

Mr. Speaker, that is my prayer for this Congress and that is my prayer for this Nation.

#### THE FARMERS' PLIGHT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MILLER of Florida). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, at the Farm Resource Center, a national crisis line for farmers, those seeking help cannot get through. The line is busy.

Small farmers and ranchers are struggling to survive in America. In fact, small farmers and ranchers are a dying breed. And because they are a dying breed, quality and affordable food and fiber for all of us are at risk.

Passage of the 1996 farm bill sounded the death knell for many of our Nation's farmers and ranchers. Farmers and ranchers, able to eke out a living from the land in past years, now find it almost impossible to break even. Most are losing money and fighting to stay in the farming business.

And the crisis line is busy.

We are all aware of the problems tobacco is having, particularly in my State, North Carolina. But, in North Carolina, according to a recent news report, the State top farm commodity, hogs, have experienced a 50 percent drop in prices since 1996. Wheat is down 42 percent. Soybeans are down 36 percent. Corn, 31 percent; peanuts, 28 percent. Turkey and cotton prices are down 23 percent since 1996. In fact, Mr. Speaker, there is no commodity in North Carolina that makes money for farmers.

And the crisis line is busy.

In 1862, the year that the Department of Agriculture was created, 90 percent of the population farmed for a living. Today, American producers represent less than 3 percent of the population. By 1992, there were only 1.1 million farms left in the United States, a 45 percent decline from 1959. North Carolina only had 39,000 farms left in 1992, a 23 percent decline. In 1920, there were over 6 million farms in the United States, and close to a sixth, 926,000, were operated by African Americans. In 1992, the landscape was very, very different. Only 1 percent of the farms in the United States were operated by African Americans, 1 percent, 18,816, a paltry sum when African Americans

comprise more than 13 percent of the population.

In my home State of North Carolina, there has been a 64 percent decline in minority farmers just over the last 15 years, from 6,996 farms in 1978 to 2,498 farms in 1992. All farmers are suffering under this severe economic downturn.

Very recently while in my district I spoke with a farmer who was working off the farm, not to earn extra money but to earn enough money to save his family farm. He makes no money from his farm for himself. He loses money from his farm. Taking a job off the farm was the only thing he could do, he said, to save his farm and pass it on to his children. He makes no money from his farm, other than to save his farm. This man is 70 years of age.

And the crisis line us busy.

Farmers and farm families deserve a chance, a chance for the dwindling number of farmers and ranchers who feed us, provide us clothes and fiber. We should also make sure they have an opportunity to make a living.

Before the Freedom to Farm bill of 1996, the farm price safety net was a shield against the uncertainty and the fluctuation of commodity prices. When the farm bill was passed, we referred to it as Freedom to Fail. I am sad to report that our admonitions have been far too accurate. We must now correct that error. We must indeed not only provide emergency funds but policies must be changed so we can meet those vulnerabilities.

If we do nothing about the real problems facing these hardworking citizens, they may not be there for us. That in turn will hurt all of us if there are no farmers to feed us and to clothe us.

#### EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. SCHAFER) who I understand properly claimed my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

#### HAITI: BRING OUR TROOPS HOME

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. Goss) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, over the weekend it was reported that the commander of U.S. troops in Latin America has recommended that troops stationed in Haiti be brought home. For most Americans, it will probably come as a surprise to learn that we still actually have troops in Haiti. Indeed, there has been little public discussion of Haiti in the years since U.S. troops helped end a coup and return President

Aristide to office down there. In the years since this dramatic operation, the situation in Haiti has gotten worse and what was once touted as the crown jewel of the Clinton administration's foreign policy is now an utter failure. Haiti has been without an effective government for almost 2 years, the judiciary is weak and the legislative branch has been effectively shut down and boarded up. The Haitian executive branch has taken a number of actions outside the constitution and caused concern to those working to consolidate democracy for our island neighbor. The political situation has grown even more tense in recent weeks following the gruesome political murder of Haitian Senator Toussaint, the attack on Senator Chery and the attack on a leading rights advocate. These ongoing attacks are the culmination of a long-standing campaign of intimidation and violence against Haitian and American individuals who are working hard in support of the rule of law, free and fair elections and economic improvement in that impoverished country.

In the midst of these troubling developments, there have been two U.S. actions of note: First, the refusal of the Clinton administration to certify Haiti as meeting its obligations in the war on drugs, in other words, they cannot do their job on that. And, second, the recommendation by General Wilhelm that we terminate the U.S. troop presence in Haiti. General Wilhelm had this to say and I quote: "As our continuous military presence in Haiti moves into its fifth year, we see little progress toward creation of a permanently stable internal security environment. In fact, with the recent expiration of parliament and imposition of rule by presidential decree, we have seen some backsliding. Though our military mission in Haiti was accomplished in 1994, we have sustained a presence that on any given day during 1998 averaged about 496 military personnel."

General Wilhelm goes on to say that he would "categorize our presence as being a benevolent one. Through a variety of humanitarian assistance and other local outreach programs, our troops have undertaken infrastructure development projects and provided urgently needed medical and dental care for the impoverished Haitian population. These contributions have been made at a cost to the Department of Defense. By our calculations, our military presence in Haiti carried a price tag of \$20,085,000 for 1998."

The General concludes: "However, at this point I am more concerned about force protection than cash outlays. The unrest generated by political instability requires us to constantly reassess the safety and security environment in which our troops are living and working. I have recommended that we terminate our permanent military presence in Haiti."

General Wilhelm's recommendation was bolstered by General Hugh Shelton, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Shelton has testified before Congress that he was "looking very hard at the Haiti operation and drawing that 350 down to a much lesser number" given the troop commitments around the world and the proposal to deploy U.S. troops to Kosovo.

While Generals Wilhelm and Shelton limited their comments to their area of responsibility, overseeing the deployment and readiness of the U.S. military, it is clear that this issue has far broader implications. Respected columnist David Broder reached the following conclusion: "The lesson is not that we should never be peacekeepers; rather, that there has to be a peace to keep. Sending in the military to impose a peace on people who have not settled ancient quarrels has to be the last resort, not the standard way of doing business."

Mr. Speaker, many respected individuals are calling on the Clinton administration to get our troops out of Haiti and begin rethinking its efforts to use our soldiers to impose peace on those who do not want it. This is not a good policy. It does not work. I believe the administration would do itself and America credit to heed the advice of these people who I think have made better suggestions than that far outpace the Clinton foreign policy.

#### MAKING RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT TAX CREDIT PERMANENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, this week a number of my colleagues in the New Democratic Coalition have come before the House to talk about a very important tax issue, and that is the need to make the R&D tax credit a permanent part of our tax law.

I would like to join with them in urging all of our colleagues to support taking a credit that has been a consistent part of our tax law but is always designed to be eliminated and then at the last minute is extended, to instead make that a permanent part of our tax law.

I have three major points, the first of which is the importance of research and development for all Americans. I think Americans are acutely aware that we live a life that is more wealthy, that we are in better financial position than 90 percent of the world. And most Americans, if asked what is the single greatest reason why Americans live so much better than those in Bangladesh or Honduras would say that